

# **PREVENTING SHOPLIFTING**

## **REPORT EVERY THIEF**

If you detect a person stealing, report it to the Police. Leniency may worsen your problem. Records show many people apprehended for shoplifting have been operating for some time. Many of them are experts in extricating themselves from the situation. Make it absolutely clear to customers and staff alike that NO leniency will be shown to anyone caught shoplifting. It is well worthwhile for every store, big or small, to display in prominent places, signs warning that anyone caught shoplifting will, without exception, be reported to the Police. In these days of goods attractively and prominently displayed, with very few staff to supervise, management would be well advised to evaluate the losses they are suffering and compare these losses with the cost of taking on more staff.

## **STOP SUSPECTS OUTSIDE THE STORE**

"Intent" is an important ingredient of theft. A person suspected of stealing should be followed and apprehended outside the shop. They then have difficulty in claiming that they intended paying for the article.

## **SUPERVISE AND TRAIN STAFF**

Supervise the staff. Leave them in no doubt as to the management's feelings on dishonesty. Every store should hold regular staff briefings on shoplifting prevention and the proper way to apprehend shoplifters. It is important that management makes sure all staff are fully briefed.

## **HOW STAFF CAN MAKE IT HARD FOR SHOPLIFTERS**

1. Give customers prompt attention as soon as they enter the shop, even if you can't serve them immediately
2. When customers take articles in to fitting rooms be sure to collect each article after use.
3. Don't leave empty coat-hangers on racks. An empty one then indicates that an article, has been removed.

## **WATCH FOR ...**

- Stolen clothing being worn when leaving fitting rooms, also articles worn on the wrist or fingers.
- Shoplifters carrying an imitation box or parcel into which articles can be placed through a slit or loose flap.
- Two or more shoppers together - one may be trying to attract your attention away from the other(s).
- People who place bags on the floor while sorting through racks. Articles may be dropped into the bag.
- People who carry a large package - they may hide a stolen item between themselves and the package.
- Items slipped into rolled umbrellas. The woman with a pram who may fuss over the baby and drop goods beneath the blankets or mattress.

## **REDUCE THE OPPORTUNITY**

1. Place large mirrors about the store. This is a psychological and physical deterrent.
2. Provide baskets and trundlers. Display signs asking for these to be used.
3. Supervise the shop. Encourage free staff to move about.
4. Thread nylon, fine wire or tape loosely through handles and other articles, to allow examination but prevent removal.
5. Install a warning device at the door. Many shoplifters enter small shops, steal and leave, without the staff even being aware that thieves were there.
6. Try to arrange your displays so that valuable, attractive, portable items are placed where they can be more easily supervised. Try to keep them out of reach, or at least place them where they cannot easily be pushed into a shopping bag or pocket.